
Two Evidence-Based Truancy Prevention Intervention Programs

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POSITIVE ACTION: Model Program

Fact Sheet

- **Positive Action (PA)**
 - MODEL, K-12, low to moderate risk
 - Start up cost \$9,800/ 360 students (\$27/student)

PROGRAM AREA

- Academic Performance
- Alcohol
- Anxiety
- Bullying
- Delinquency and Criminal Behavior
- Depression
- Emotional Regulation
- Illicit Drug Use
- Positive Social/Prosocial Behavior
- Sexual Risk Behaviors
- Tobacco
- Truancy - School Attendance
- Violence
- Families

Program Type

- Alcohol Prevention and Treatment
- Drug Prevention/Treatment
- School - Environmental Strategies
- School - Individual Strategies
- Skills Training
- Social Emotional Learning
- Conflict Resolution/Interpersonal Skills
- Truancy Prevention
- Bullying Prevention/Intervention

Program Setting

- School

- Home
- Other Community Setting

Age

- 0 - 18

Gender

- Male and Female

Race/Ethnicity

- All Race/Ethnicity

Endorsements

- Crime Solutions: Effective
- Blueprints: Model Program
- OJJDP Model Programs: Effective
- SAMHSA: 2.2-2.8

Program Information Contact

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Program Description

Description of Program

Positive Action (PA) is a school-based program that includes a detailed curriculum with lessons 2-4 times a week—approximately 140 15-minute lessons per grade K-6, and 82 15-20 minute lessons per grade 7 and 8. The content of the classroom curriculum is taught through six units, which teach the following:

1. The Positive Action Philosophy and the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle This unit provides the conceptual foundation for the content of the program delivered in Units 2-6 and teaches generally about positive and negative actions and their meaning for and application to life. The remaining units teach the specific positive actions for the whole self: the physical, intellectual, social and emotional.
2. Positive Actions for Body and Mind - This unit focuses on nutrition, exercise, sleep, hygiene and other good health habits for the physical area, and thinking skills, problem solving, decision making, memorizing, reasoning, thinking creatively, curiosity study skills and the value of learning for the intellectual area.

3. Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Managing Yourself Responsibly - Students are taught to manage their personal resources like time, energy, thoughts, actions, feelings, money, talents and possessions, including basic self-control or self-regulation skills.
4. Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Getting Along with Others - Students are taught to get along with others by treating them the way they would like to be treated, so they learn about respect, empathy, kindness, fairness, and cooperation and other ways they like to be treated.
5. Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Being Honest with Yourself and Others - Students are taught to be honest with themselves and others by responsibility taking, learning how to be truthful, admitting to mistakes, not blaming others, knowing their own strengths and weaknesses, and following through with commitments.
6. Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Improving Yourself Continuously - Students are taught how to set and achieve goals for all areas of themselves and learn how to reach goals by having the courage to try, turning problems into opportunities, believing in their potential, persisting and keeping an open mind in order to broaden their horizons.

School-climate programs (elementary and secondary) are also utilized. They reinforce the classroom curriculum through coordinating the efforts of the entire school in the practice and reinforcement of positive actions. The school principal and a PA Committee administer this component with representatives from the faculty at each grade level, support staff, parents, students and community members. The principal is responsible for 1) initiating the adoption process, 2) appointing a PA coordinator and a PA committee, 3) coordinating training and professional development workshops and work groups, and 4) coordinating multiple resources. To encourage positivity throughout the school, principals are encouraged to use the provided materials -- such as stickers, tokens, posters, music CDs, words of the week cards, certificates, balloons, and ICU Doing Something Positive boxes. For the secondary level there is a PALs Club with membership cards, a Peace Flag, Buzz Words and SOS Boxes. Principals are also provided with information on creating newsletters, and conducting assemblies and celebrations for Positive Action.

PA also includes a Counselor's Kit which contains curriculum and materials that provide school counselors, social workers and school psychologists with the resources and information needed to do mentoring, peer tutoring, and support group programs, useful for students who may need more intense help than they are getting in the classroom. It contains a Topical Guide, which indicates which lessons and units to use for a specific subject of focus.

Optional: Positive Action comes with optional supplements and kits that have not been certified by Blueprints.

The Bullying, Fifth Grade Drug, Middle School Drug and Conflict Resolution Kits can be used with the regular PA curriculum or stand alone. The two or three lessons for each unit from these curricula can be added to the end of each unit to focus the unit topic on the subject of the kits; or the supplement kits can stand alone in their entirety.

A family component provides parents with the opportunity to deliver a family curriculum. The Positive Action Family Kit contains 42 lessons, posters, music, games, activity sheets, Conflict Resolution Plans, Problem Solving and Decision Making Checklists, Words of the Week cards, and an ICU Doing Something Positive box and other materials for use at home. The Family Classes Instruction Kit provides seven two-hour lessons for parents, adolescents, and children to learn how to implement the Positive Action curriculum at home. There is also a Parent Classes Kit of seven one-hour classes. These components also encourage parents to become more involved with the school through participation on the PA Committee, attending PA assemblies and through volunteer work.

Finally, a Community program is also available for use with coalitions and other community development groups. This program seeks to organize the community to do community-wide PA events and outlines projects to be done by sub-groups of the community, such as mental health, media, business, law enforcement and judicial. The Community/Coalition Kit contains a manual for the PA Community Committee to use to take the program community-wide. It also contains a Family Kit, a Counselor's Kit, a Conflict Resolution Kit and a Media Kit.

A program for preschool children and a stand-alone version of a family program have been evaluated in pilot randomized trials.

The implementations for the two randomized trials in Hawaii and Chicago were conducted in K-5/6 or K-8 schools in Hawaii and Chicago, respectively. The program was implemented school-wide, utilized the school-wide climate change and counselor kits, and provided the curriculum to all grades in the trial schools and parent manuals to all parents. However, due to late start-up, holidays and test schedules, teachers delivered the curriculum for only 20-25 weeks per year. Teachers were allowed to combine or skip lessons (and were pointed to key lessons) in order to catch up. The teacher/school trainings generally consisted of one half day at the beginning of each year in Hawaii schools and a little less in Chicago schools.

Program Start-Up Costs

Initial Training and Technical Assistance

Training is available three ways: on-site provided by developer staff, on-line webinars and self-training workshop kits. The developer strongly recommends on-site training provided by Positive Action trainers, and this is the only training format certified by Blueprints as all evaluations included on-site training. On-site training lasts an average of one day at \$3,000 per day plus trainer travel. Typically all teachers in a school are trained together, along with the principal and counselors. If schools are small, an on-site training for two schools together could be considered.

Curriculum and Materials

Curriculum costs vary with targeted grades and with the number of optional components that are included. Instructor kits range from \$390 to \$460 per teacher. Optional kits include bullying prevention, drug education, conflict resolution, parenting and family classes and cost from \$75 to

\$1,450. Climate Development Kits cost \$460 and are available for the principal or leader when a climate project is included in a school's plan.

Licensing

None separate from purchasing kits and materials from Positive Action, Inc.

Total Year One Cost

\$9,859 (If the school in the example had 360 students, the cost per student would be \$27.39.)

EFFECTIVE: Adolescent Diversion Project (MSU-ADP)**Fact Sheet****• Adolescent Diversion Project (MSU-ADP)**

- EFFECTIVE, 13-15 yo, moderate risk
- (\$1,020/youth)

PROGRAM AREA

- Youth

PROGRAM TYPE

- Conflict Resolution/Interpersonal Skills
-

- Diversion
- Mentoring
- Wraparound/Case Management

PROGRAM SETTING

- Other Community Setting

AGE

- 13 - 15

GENDER

- Male and Female

RACE/ETHNICITY

- Black, White, Other

ENDORSEMENTS

- National Institute of Justice: Effective Program
- Model Programs Guide

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Program Description

Program Goals

The Adolescent Diversion Project (ADP) is a strengths-based, university-led program that diverts arrested youth from formal processing in the juvenile justice system and provides them with community-based services. Based upon a combination of theoretical perspectives, the goal of the ADP is to prevent future delinquency by strengthening youth's attachment to family and other prosocial individuals, increasing youth's access to resources in the community, and keeping youth from potentially stigmatizing social contexts (such as the juvenile justice system).

The program began in 1976, through a collaboration among Michigan State University, personnel from the Ingham County (Mich.) Juvenile Court, and members of the community in response to a rise in juvenile crime and the need for cost-saving alternatives to the formal processing of juveniles.

Program Theory

The conceptual framework of the ADP involves three theoretical perspectives: social control and bonding, social learning, and social-interactionist theories. Social control theory emphasizes the importance of social bonds in preventing delinquent behavior (Hirschi 1969). Social learning theory suggests that delinquency is learned through interactions with family, peers, and others (Aker 1990). Finally, social-interactionist theory suggests that it is the labeling of behavior as delinquent that results in further social interactions that intentionally or unintentionally label youth as delinquent (Shur 1973).

Key Personnel

The ADP is run by the Psychology Department at Michigan State University. Undergraduate psychology students participate in a two-semester course in which they receive training in diversion work and carry out 8 hours per week of community-based structured mentoring. The student volunteers are trained for 8 weeks in specific behavioral intervention techniques and advocacy, followed by 18 weeks of intensive supervision while they work with juveniles referred by the Intake Division of the Ingham County Juvenile Court.

Program Components

The ADP focuses on creating an alternative to juvenile court processing within a strengths-based, advocacy framework. During the 18-week intervention, the caseworkers (i.e., student volunteers) spend 6–8 hours per week with the juveniles in their home, school, and community. The caseworkers work one-on-one with juveniles in order to provide them with services tailored to their specific needs. Caseworkers focus on improving juveniles' skills in several areas, including family relationships, school issues, employment, and free-time activities. For example, caseworkers teach youth about resources available in the community so that juveniles can access these resources on their own once the program is over.

The first 12 weeks of services are called the active phase, and case workers spend time each

week with juveniles while providing direct assistance in behavioral contracting and advocacy efforts. During the last four weeks of services, called the follow-up phase, case workers spend a little less time each week assisting juveniles in those same areas, but their role is that of a consultant, preparing juveniles to use the techniques and strategies they've learned following the end of the program.

Program Costs

A cost analysis found that the Adolescent Diversion Project (ADP) costs approximately \$1,020.83 per youth for an 18-week intervention, which includes overhead and administrative costs. In comparison, a local juvenile court spent \$13,466 for the average youth served. In a typical year, ADP provides services to 144 youth and the county juvenile court system serves 375 youths. The difference in cost of serving 144 youths in ADP versus traditional juvenile court results in a savings of approximately \$1,799,104 per year (Sturza and Williams 2006).

